

# Butternut Production: requirements, growing, diseases and harvesting

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## 1. Main Issues

- Family group
- Optimum growth conditions
- Fertilizer Application
- Planting
- Disease and Pest Control
- Harvesting

## 2. Useful Information

### 2.1 Family Group

It belongs to the cucurbit family of vegetable crops and is a highly nutritious crop. It is the same family as pumpkins, cucumbers, baby marrow, squash fruit.

### 2.2 Optimal growth conditions

- It grows well on well drained fertile soils.
- It is very sensitive to oxygen deficiency in the soil. Requires warm conditions.

- Requires a lot of water but high humidity encourages leaf diseases and may affect flower production.
- Keep the soil moist all the time.
- It is tolerant to high temperatures.
- It suits to be grown in areas where water melons are grown.
- The crop is highly susceptible to frost.

### 2.3 Fertilizer application

Apply 10-15tons /ha manure of well rotted compost a month before planting or apply 600kg /ha of Compound D and top dress with 100kg AN /ha after the first fruits have formed.

### 2.4 Planting

Can be planted from April to August and late July to November at high altitudes. Winter production is only possible in low lying areas and this can be between April and August. Seed requirement is 2.5-3.5kg/ha. Plant in basins/hills or in furrows. Basins should have a diameter of 600-1200mm with a higher centre. Spacing recommended is 3.0mx2.0m

### 2.5 Disease and Pest Control

The crop can be attacked by the following diseases and pests.

Disease	Symptoms	Favoured Conditions	Control
Anthraco nose	Black angular spots appear on the leaves with black streaks on stems and leaf stalks. Sunken lesions on the fruit producing spore masses under moist conditions	Common and severe during the rainy season	Spray control can be affected with Maneb, Mancozeb and chlothalonil, Zineb.
Powdery Mildew	White mealy blotches on leaf surfaces	Warm and humid	Spraying with at weekly intervals during susceptible periods with carbendazim or benomyl. Sulphur should not be used.
Downey Mildew	Circular to rectangular small brown spots surrounded by a yellow halo appear on the leaves. The spots are biscuit brown on the underside of the leaves or covered with a	Warm and humid	Control can be done using Sulphur Mancozeb or Zineb. If done during the early stages of the disease they will provide adequate control.

	fungus and appear scattered. Under serious condition the leaf dies from the edges inward resembling frost damage.		
Mosaic	Leaves show dark green to light green mosaic with a blistered surface. Under severe cases the plants remain stunted and do not bear fruit and leaves will be malformed and curled.	Warm and humid	Aphid control is importance in curbing the spread. Remove and destroy all infected plants. Avoid smoking and any contact with tobacco products.
<b>Common Pests</b>			
<b>Pest</b>	<b>Damage Caused</b>	<b>Method of control</b>	
Pumpkin fly	Dry indented patch on fruit and subsequent rotting	Chemical sprays at the beginning of flowering stage using malathion baits and fruit fly spray.	
Aphids	Transmit mosaic virus diseases	Control can be done using Dimethoate, Diazinon or Metasystox.	

## 2.6 Harvesting

Harvesting is done when butternut is about 15cm length. Avoid the butternut ripening on the plant as this prevents new flowers from development. Yields can be 10kg per m<sup>2</sup>. The harvested crop can store up to 3 months in a clean well ventilated room.

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